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## THE AMBLESIDE CONFERENCE, 1907.

TUESDAY, 9TH.—The Conference began at 9-30 a.m. on Tuesday, April 9th. There were present—

Misses Allen, Bernau, Blease, Dismore, Mrs. Esslemont, Misses Flower, Fountain, Judd, Laurence, Moule, Owen, Parish, Roffe, Rothera, Russell, E. A. Smith, Stainton, M. Wilkinson, and R. M. Williams.

Miss Mason's note of welcome unfortunately arrived too late to be read on Tuesday. Miss Parish's paper will appear in the P.R., so need not be reported here, as the discussion did not turn chiefly upon her points.

WEDNESDAY, 10TH, 9-30 a.m.—Miss Allen read Miss Mason's greeting. We then proceeded to discuss Art: Picture Talks, Original Illustration. Miss Parish began by saying that she thought the two chief uses of art were: to give the power of self-expression and to help to an appreciation of beauty wherever it may be found. The latter is the more important because we cannot all become "artists" in the sense of "painters." Miss Parish advocated a variety in the manner of taking the "talk." Children might sometimes be allowed each to describe a picture, so as to make the others see and recognise it. The opinion of the Conference was distinctly against "tracing." [Notes also in Miss Clendinnan's letter.]

A lesson in *illustration* was given on Thursday. From Miss Mason's criticism upon it we learn that there should be very little "lesson." Just a few words to make sure that children know what they are going to paint, a hint or two about scene, grouping of figures, dress, &c. Brushes to be used generally, and not pencil first, though a pencil sketch may be asked for occasionally.

With regard to animal drawing, it was suggested that the teacher should get the children to make a mental picture of the creature to be drawn by a gesture accompanying her



words: *e.g.*, "the round breast of Robin, and his little "cocked-up tail," making a motion with her hand as if putting these marks on B.B.

Modifications in the Programme when working Schools. These have, of course, been found necessary, and letters were read explaining them. [Miss Clendinnen, Miss Gayford, Miss Pennethorne.] We must just do the best we can with the time at our disposal, in the spirit of utter loyalty to our tenets, and stick *as closely* to the Programme as circumstances allow. Many opportunities occur in little things for "character" training; we must be content to "sow in faith," and not expect immediate and visible results.

THURSDAY, 11TH.—Miss Russell's report of the "Association discussion" only needs supplementing by some explanation of the "heads."

The "Bran-tub" is to be a miscellaneous column to include notes and notices of "tools" and other aid and accessories, apart from "Books."

"P.R.S. notes" to apply to the Technical part of our teaching, in contrast with "Psychology," which means character-study and training.

A vote of thanks was proposed, and carried unanimously, to Miss Gray for the patient and admirable way in which she performs the thankless task of collecting our subscriptions and forwards our magazines.

Miss Laurence was proposed, and provisionally appointed, as Assistant Editor, to help Miss Pennethorne with the mechanical part of the work, correction of proofs, &c.

The discussion on Geography really confined itself to a talk about the manufacture of Plasticine Maps. It was generally thought that they were helpful and most interesting; but some people seemed to feel that they took a great deal of time for a small result, also that generally it would mean the teacher doing the work while the pupils looked on.

Two or three "aids" to the teaching of geography were mentioned during the Conference:—

- (1) Hall's Tours: a kind of Cinematograph Exhibition, which can be seen in Oxford Street, opposite

Warings', and in High Street, Kensington, opposite Barker's. The "Tour" is changed every week; it takes ten or fifteen minutes to go, at a cost of sixpence apiece.

- (2) The World's Series of Maps, medium size for use on a black-board easel, 1s. 11d. each, to be obtained at the Educational Supply Association, 42a, Holborn Viaduct, E.C.
- (3) Beecham's "Photo. Folio" (British Isles) in parts, containing twenty-four pictures at one penny each, obtainable at St. Helens, Lancashire. Any part contains a list of those published.

Two Criticism Lessons were given: "Latin Translation" III. and "Illustration" III. In the first the teacher tried to rouse the girls' interest in the story to be translated by a few words about the Latins and the founding of Rome.

Grammar questions were freely introduced, and at the end conversational questions on the subject of the lesson were put and answered in Latin.

In the second lesson interest was lacking owing to the fact that the teacher had, without knowing it, selected a subject which the children had already illustrated.

So much time was taken up with going over the subject that no pictures were produced. Miss Mason's remarks are reported under Wednesday.

On Thursday evening Ex-Students were invited by present Students to "dancing, masks, dominoes." We had a very jolly time, and soon dropped disguises, as we desired to make and not shun acquaintance.

FRIDAY, APRIL 12TH.—On Friday we had a talk with Miss Mason over Examinations, &c. Her answers to our questions are reported elsewhere. We also went to Miss Williams' Philosophy Lecture, and much enjoyed hearing about Leibnitz and his Philosophy.

In the afternoon we had a Geography Walk with Miss Williams, who gave us a delightful history of Ambleside.

In the evening the Juniors invited us to an "entertainment," and we much enjoyed some good tableaux illustrating scenes from well-known books and a scene from Alice in Wonderland.



SATURDAY, 13TH.—This morning a few of us were present at an introductory lesson in Biology given by Miss Drury. Miss Drury's aim was to show the enormous range of this subject, and she did this by naming a number of subordinate sciences which treat of different parts of the Science of Life, looked at from different points of view. She also named some of the great scientists, and contrasted their methods of observation and classification.

We also had a Mathematical Lecture from Miss Williams, who introduced us to a book lately published by Sir Oliver Lodge. It is called "Easy Mathematics," and contains many helpful suggestions. He gives two main principles to be kept in mind from the first, *e.g.*, (1) numbers can be looked upon in groups, and, (2) numbers can be broken up.

On Saturday Miss Mason and Miss Williams gave an "At Home," with music. We met many old friends, and enjoyed it greatly. When most of the guests were gone Mr. Yates performed, for our benefit, many old favourites, with fine choruses; and we had a sermon on "Old Mothor Hubbard." "God save the King" concluded the proceedings, and came all too soon.

On Sunday we had lunch and tea and spent the afternoon at Scale How, and Miss Mason gave us a beautiful "Meditation" on St. John xv. 1—11.

Those of us who were present at the Conference wrote on behalf of the Association to thank Mr. Yates most warmly for all his kind interest in the College, and particularly for his last generous manifestation thereof.

This is a most beautiful and splendid portrait of our old friend Dr. Johnston. The likeness is really wonderful, and will be a lasting reminder of many generations of grateful students.

## REPORT OF THE STUDENTS' CONFERENCE.

Tuesday, April 9th.—Miss Laurence in the chair: 9-30.

The Chairman read a telegram received from Miss Gray, expressing good wishes for the Conference.

Miss Allen then read letter received from Miss Pennethorne. Miss Pennethorne expressed regret for her unavoidable absence from the Conference.

Various points were then touched upon with reference to the P.R.S. and Character Training. The "Large Curriculum" was emphasized as vital to P.R.S. teaching, and absolutely opposed to the antiquated cry of "thorough," which embraced only a few subjects of study.

Regarding the character training of children who receive daily teaching, Miss Pennethorne had found a system of Points useful as a means of encouraging good habits. The child started with 100 good points, which, if lost, might be redeemed by good conduct.

Some teachers found that a transition class between Classes II. and III. was unnecessary.

Some suggestions were then made regarding the Students' Association. It was of great importance that the students should recognize the duties that devolved upon them as members; that they should attend the meetings, and should establish connections with any other students who were in the same neighbourhood. They were also bound to hold by the P.N.E.U. principles, and especially to bring them clearly before the meetings of outlying branches.

Miss Parish then read a paper on "Scripture Teaching," which was followed by discussion.

Miss FLOWER in reference to the Paper instanced the case of a child who does not like to learn portions of Scripture by heart, feeling that in doing so she is treating the Bible as a lesson book.



Mrs. ESSLEMONT suggested that the Scotch version of the Metrical Psalms might be substituted with the same good results.

Miss PARISH thought that this form of Scripture would not appeal equally well to an English child. Miss Parish described a lesson given upon Job xxvii, xviii. The subject was quite new to children. (1) The portion was first read by the teacher, (2) then carefully explained verse by verse, (3) read through again slowly. At the end of the lesson the children could repeat a large portion of the lesson without a mistake. Might not the same plan of frequent repetition be tried in the case mentioned by Miss Flower.

#### ABBOTT'S BIBLE LESSONS.

Miss ALLEN found the book an extremely difficult one to take with children.

Miss FOUNTAIN. The book should be studied by the teacher, and made the foundation of the term's work. Some students asked the children the questions at the end of the book.

Miss ALLEN thought that the questions should be put by the teacher to herself in preparing the lesson: it would take too long for the children to answer the questions.

Miss FOUNTAIN. The questions assume much acquaintance with Bible study, and require to be worked out.

Miss ALLEN found "Clues to Holy Writ" a good book of reference.

The question was put whether the Church Catechism could be taught during the week. The set time for Scripture is limited, especially when the Collect and Hymn are included.

This question is met by learning and repeating in repetition time on alternate days.

#### PATERSON SMYTH.

Portions of Scripture are left out between the lessons.

Miss Allen and Miss Bernau connected the lessons by a few words.

Miss Parish and Miss Rothera left out the portion, as not to be done in the time.

Miss PARISH. Paterson Smyth is used as a guide to

lessons. The children also much enjoy the descriptive portions when read aloud to them.

Miss R. WILLIAMS asked for the name of a book which would help in teaching the Catechism. Information may be found in the "History of the Prayer Book." Also "Lessons on Church Catechism," published by the Sunday School Institute, and Paterson Smyth has a work on the subject.

10-30—11-0. Miss Rothera gave a demonstration lesson in Swedish Drill.

11-0. Chairman read a letter from Miss Winnie Kitching expressing regret for absence.

The desirability of a *Transition Class between Classes II. and III.* was discussed.

Some teachers have found difficulty in preparing the children of Class II. for the work of Class III., especially with the subjects of grammar and arithmetic in which the work should be continuous. Miss Mason's arrangement has been that no examinations should be given in the summer term, and that the children should be worked up to join the work and examinations of Class III. by the end of the autumn term. In the interval the children take subjects in both Classes as required, and are encouraged to make efforts to reach the standard of Class III.

Miss PENNETHORNE has found this plan satisfactory.

Miss ALLEN. Children who have not reached the standard of Class III., and are working in both classes, have taken the examination in the respective class that they have worked.

A remark is written on the paper stating which set of questions has been taken.

Mrs. ESSLEMONT thought that if the children were moved to Class III., and were put back to work into Class II. in certain subjects, they would lose interest.

#### HISTORY.

A suggestion was made that when children of different ages were taught together, the younger might be taken for recapitulation, while the elder wrote reports.



Miss ALLEN. It is good practice for a child of nine to write a report.

Arnold Foster is used, and with Class III. a great deal of Green.

Miss PARISH. With regard to jumping periods of History necessitated by changing classes, the period should be entirely left.

This is a disadvantage; but there are many compensations in school life and work.

This question of leaving portions of History was put to Miss Mason.

Miss MASON suggested that one or two lessons should be given to bridge over the interval; they should be bright and descriptive, and should just sketch in the changes that had taken place: the children should not be required to reproduce them.

Miss LAURENCE. In changing classes there is often a great jump in mathematics and grammar. These cannot be left, and to meet such cases a space is left for examination questions set by the teacher.

Miss Parish and Miss Allen found no difficulty in transition. The children who were moved up were very keen to keep up with Class III. The case was given also of a child moved from Ib to Class II. She worked chiefly on the lines of Ib, but was anxious to catch up: she was examined in Class Ib, and what she knew of Class II. The child was urged, and made efforts on her own behalf to catch up to Class II.

A resolution was passed that work may be taken from each class according to the needs of the children, and the examinations may be taken according to work in either class.

Also that the difficulty of transition between classes may be met by combining classes for one or more terms.

11-45.

## REPORTS IN P.R.S.

Miss Flower opened the discussion with a few remarks concerning the examinations.

1. Are the remarks of Parents on the examination paper meant for criticism of the examination only, or should they take into account the term's work?

The general opinion was that remarks should be made only upon work done in the examination.

2. The system of marking is not always clear, children sometimes receiving low marks for an apparently perfect paper. A case was given of an examination in Picture Talk, in which the description was given with perfect accuracy, and the marking was very low.

Miss PARISH. It is possible that the child may give a correct description of the details, and yet quite fail to grasp the meaning, beauty, and spirit of the picture; criticised in this way the examination answers would receive low marks.

Miss R. WILLIAMS. With small children it was found that there was not always time to write the whole of an answer. In that case the teacher might write the latter part of the answer from the child's dictation.

In the discussion that followed it was decided that the time table must be adhered to during the examination week; but that when any examination is finished, the extra time may be given to unfinished examinations. The examinations should occupy a week.

Miss ROTHERA. The children are given the subject for the Blank Verse on the day before the verses are to be written.

Miss ALLEN. The blank verse examination should be written immediately after the subject has been given. The general opinion was in favour of the latter method.

## REPORTS IN P.R. SCHOOLS.

In drawing up a report it would be well to give the *maximum*, the *marks attained*, and the *highest marks* reached in the class for each subject; also written remarks by the teacher on the work done. The report might be shown to the children, that they may know the opinion that is held of their work.

The following questions were put to Miss Mason as a result of the discussion:

1. Why incomplete papers get full marks, and apparently perfect papers are marked very low?
2. On what standard are Picture Talks marked?
3. What is meant exactly by taking each subject in its time on the time table?



In answer to questions one and two, Miss Mason dwelt upon the care with which the examination answers were studied and criticised. She reminded the Conference that no judgment could be infallible, and that errors might occur in the marking of the papers. Marks, however, should not be too much insisted on: an unexpected result in the marks of the examinations should be taken philosophically as the "fortunes of war," and no fuss should be made. It is a great lesson of life that we should cease to weigh our deserts against the treatment we receive, and this might be learnt in part from examinations. Miss Mason also said that the examiners' standard of criticism might possibly differ from the teachers', and that his authority was higher.

In answer to question three, Miss Mason agreed with the decisions of the Conference. Spare time might be devoted to unfinished examinations: the examination *must not*, however, exceed a week, as the strain would be too great for the children.

With regard to the marking of "Home Subjects," Miss Mason said it was allowable for the governess to do it, when the parents felt themselves handicapped by want of experience.

Wednesday.—Miss Allen in the chair.

#### THE PRINCIPLE OF TEACHING ART.

##### PICTURE TALKS AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM.

It was suggested that all pictures want taking differently. For instance: The Lady of Shalott should be taught with the poem, or "The Light of the World" with the Bible or Bishop How's hymn. When reproducing pictures, it has sometimes proved successful:—

First—To let the child draw a piece of the picture which pleases him most.

Second—To make a plan of the picture.

Third—To narrate what he has noticed in the picture.

Fourth—To reproduce it on the blackboard.

##### USE OF A PICTURE TALK.

Is it a mechanical means of obtaining natural observation or finding the beauty?

Decidedly its beauty is most important.

Several ways were suggested for keeping the pictures afterwards:—

1. Booklets were made of brown paper, and each artist's work occupied a different one.
2. The schoolroom walls were papered brown and the pictures fastened on it with pins.

A question was raised as to whether it is advisable to *write* a description, and the general opinion seemed to be in favour of it. It might sometimes be taken as composition.

Should you take a life of an artist?

If a beautiful life it might be taken in classes III. and IV. briefly, but unnecessary in I. and II.

##### ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATION.

This subject appears easy to some children and difficult to others. If difficult in the first lesson give them a few leading ideas, and in the next let them reproduce the same.

Or again take two consecutive outside illustrations, then two consecutive inside illustrations. For instance, two lessons with sky and trees appearing, &c.

In historical pictures children must know the clothes worn in the period; also they must draw from memory and *not* copy from the teacher.

If animals cannot be seen then a series of pictures of animals in different positions may be shown, and the children draw *one* of those positions from memory.

Children may substitute other moving objects for animals set, if they cannot possibly be seen.

##### P.R.S. IN SCHOOLS.

##### MODIFICATION IN THE PROGRAMME.

In writing copies, where copy-books are used, it is thought best to begin with the *bottom line* and work to the top, instead of *vice versa*.

In English Grammar Miss Mason's Grammar has been used in Class Ib.

In English History Ib same as II, but taken in separate classes.

In Arithmetic in Class II. Longman's is generally used after A B C books.



In Drawing studies from life should be done from memory in charcoal and colour.

Nature Walks and Scouting are taken alternately on Wednesday afternoons.

In some cases Scott's novels cannot be finished, and an abridged form of them has been used, published by Black, Edinburgh.

It has been found necessary to omit German and Italian in Class III., where morning work only is done, and no work on Saturday.

#### LANGUAGE TEACHING.

Throughout language teaching the Gouin method is the main idea, *i.e.*, describe the picture first, then question in French, and draw answers from the children in French.

French counting and conversation should be taken.

English can be spoken while explaining in Classes I. and II.

French Poetry should be taught as a Gouin lesson, then written in Classes II., III. and IV.

French reports should be done in lesson time.

Hale's Tours (price 6d.) are interesting in teaching geography, and can be taken in Oxford Street, opposite Waring's, and High Street, Kensington, opposite Barker's. Also any parts of the World's Series Maps (price 1/11) can be got at Ed. Supply Association, Holborn Viaduct.

#### CHARACTER TRAINING IN DAY PUPILS.

It is thought that children left to themselves or nurses do not get sufficient character training. We must be contented to give the inspiration and have faith, put the highest we conceive before the children, and hope for good results.

## THE AMBLESIDE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION.

#### THURSDAY.

This Association exists for the mutual help and encouragement of ex-Students. I fear Miss Pennethorne's indictment is true, and the first question which rises in our minds, if not to our lips, is, "What does the Association do for me?" But let us take the other side first, as she suggests, and ask, "What can I do for the Association?" First, *join* it. Personally I feel—(I may be wrong, and am quite open to conviction)—but I feel strongly that every Student who leaves Scale How imbued with the principles—which are the very air we breathe, and panting to put them into practice—owes it to herself and others to become a member of the Association. This will help to keep in mind the fact that, though each of us has her own individual life to live, yet we are one body, and everyone members one of another.

Outsiders look upon us as "House of Education Students," and are watching closely for us to prove ourselves worthy disciples of such a head! A failure in loyalty, zeal, or courtesy is a reflection on our training and an injury to all.

May I put in a word for our much-to-be-pitied, patient treasurer, and plead for regular payment of subscriptions? This seems a small thing, but much time and postage is wasted annually on trying to collect these; and surely courtesy demands that those who wish to withdraw from membership should intimate it otherwise than by ignoring repeated appeals!

Then our poor "Umile Pianta!" Do we all help to nourish it as we might? I think not. I own I have not done my part, but I hope to improve.

Might we not each one resolve to send at least one contribution a year—the report of a lecture which has inspired us—an account of some method we have found helpful in our work—Natural History Notes—Gleanings from Budgets &c.,